

Amendments to the Specification:

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 22, which starts with "FIG. 1A is an alternative."

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 27 with the following amended paragraph:

With reference to FIGS. 1 and 1A, the medication management system (MMS) 10 of the present invention includes a medication management unit (MMU) 12 and a medical device 14, typically operating in conjunction with one or more information systems or components of a hospital environment 16. The term hospital environment should be construed broadly herein to mean any medical care facility, including but not limited to a hospital, treatment center, clinic, doctor's office, day surgery center, hospice, nursing home, and any of the above associated with a home care environment. As discussed below, there can be a variety of information systems in a hospital environment. As shown in FIG. 1, the MMU 12 communicates to a hospital information system (HIS) 18 via a caching mechanism 20 that is part of the hospital environment 16.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

It will be understood by those of skill in art that the caching mechanism 20 is primarily a pass through device for facilitating communication with the HIS 18 and its functions can be eliminated or incorporated into the MMU 12 (~~FIG. 1A~~) and/or the medical device 14 and/or the HIS 18 and/or other

information systems or components within the hospital environment 16. The Caching Mechanism 20 provides temporary storage of hospital information data separate from the HIS 18, the medication administration record system (MAR) 22, pharmacy information system (PhIS) 24, physician order entry (POE) 26, and/or Lab System 28. The Caching Mechanism 20 provides information storage accessible to the Medication Management System 10 to support scenarios where direct access to data within the hospital environment 16 is not available or not desired. For example, the caching mechanism 20 provides continued flow of information in and out of the MMU 12 in instances where the HIS 18 down or the connectivity between the MMU 12 and the electronic network (not shown) is down. The caching mechanism 20 also provides improved response time to queries from the MMU 12 to the HIS 18, as direct queries to the HIS 18 are not consistently processed at the same speed and often require a longer period of time for the HIS 18 to process.